



# New York Field Office

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## Endangered Species



### Congressional District #23

*John McHugh*

In drafting the Endangered Species Act (ESA) over a quarter century ago, Congress set an ambitious goal: to reverse the alarming trend of human-caused extinctions that threatened certain species, and the ecosystems in which we all live.

In New York State, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is actively engaged in carrying out provisions of the ESA at two offices: the New York Field Office, centrally located in Cortland, New York, and the Long Island Field Office, located close to where issues arise with Long Island's four listed species, in Islip, Long Island.

The Service's endangered species responsibilities include:

- Listing, reclassifying, and delisting species under the ESA;
- Consulting with Federal agencies on activities that may affect listed species;
- Reviewing (and potentially permitting) non-Federal activities that may result in the take of listed species;
- Enforcing species protection under the ESA;
- Overseeing species recovery activities, including providing for the protection of important habitat; and
- Providing assistance to States and others to assist with their endangered species conservation efforts.

The Service is involved with listed species conservation efforts in District #23:

#### Bald eagle - Threatened



**Bald eagle**

Although range-wide the bald eagle has made an amazing recovery, in New York State, we are still concerned about the continued encroachment on and alternation of bald eagle nesting and roosting habitat (typically adjacent to large bodies of water, including rivers and lakes) which remains the biggest single threat to this species in our State. Landscape protection efforts on the part of the State, conservation organizations, and the Federal government are not keeping up with logging operations, commercial and residential construction, and increasing demands for public use of waterways and adjacent riparian zones, for recreation, including boating, canoeing, kayaking. In District 23, we review projects that may affect bald eagles, and provide technical assistance to the project proponents and agency staff on how to avoid or minimize impacts. The degree of our involvement depends on the location, size, nature, and duration of a proposed project.

### Bog turtle - Threatened



**Bog turtle**

The bog turtle is found in specialized fen communities in central/western New York and in open meadow, spring-fed habitats in southeastern New York. There are just five known sites and two additional historic sites with potential for extant populations in the central/western region of the State. Bog turtles can be difficult to find and the Service is currently supporting efforts by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), NY Natural Heritage Program, and local universities to locate additional sites throughout New York. We are also actively involved with protection, habitat restoration, and management of known bog turtle sites.

### Chittenango ovate amber snail - Threatened

The Chittenango ovate amber snail is only known to occur at Chittenango Falls State Park. The Service has been actively involved with recovery efforts for this species, along with multiple partners, including the NYSDEC, NY State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, local universities, and zoological institutions. The Service is part of the Chittenango Ovate Amber Snail Recovery Team, which released a draft revised recovery plan for the snail in 2003 and should finalize the plan in 2004. The Service has also assisted with funding research at Chittenango Falls State Park to better estimate the current population size.



**Chittenango Falls**

### Indiana bat - Endangered

The Indiana bat's range includes much of the eastern half of the United States from Oklahoma to Georgia, north to Wisconsin, Michigan, New York, and Vermont. In New York there are nine known hibernacula in which Indiana bats spend their winters in a state of torpor. While the Indiana bat was one of the first species listed under the ESA, we have a great deal more to learn about its biology, status, and threats to its survival. The Service is part of a large-scale effort led by the NYSDEC, in coordination with other agencies including the NY Natural Heritage Program, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Defense, Pennsylvania Game and Fish Commission, and Vermont Department of Natural Resources to investigate Indiana bat movements and habitat use within the Northeast. Indiana bats are captured as they emerge from their hibernacula in the spring and marked with radio transmitters.

Biologists then follow the bats to determine how far they move from the hibernacula and what types of habitat they are using. A hibernaculum in Jefferson County will be the focus of a proposed emergence study in 2005.



**Indiana bat**

### Piping plover critical habitat

The Service designated critical habitat for the piping plover in 2001. Seventeen miles of Lake Ontario shoreline are included in the designation, therefore, projects involving a Federal connection are subject to consultation procedures under the ESA. The largest project within the Lake Ontario basin (which may have impacts on critical habitat for the piping plover) is the management of Lake Ontario water levels. The Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Study Review Board is completing a 5-year study on the potential impacts (including impacts to navigation, recreational boating, the environment, shoreline property, water use, hydroelectric power) of various water level management scenarios.



**Lake Ontario Critical Habitat**

### Wind power

The Service recognizes that wind-generated electrical energy is renewable, produces no emissions, and is generally environmentally clean technology and that the Secretary of the Interior strongly endorses the development of wind energy. However, we are uncertain about the potential impacts to our trust species including migratory birds and Federally listed species such as the bald eagle and Indiana bat. The Service has developed interim guidelines to assist applicants with project siting, construction, and monitoring to avoid and minimize impacts to wildlife from wind power projects. More information can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/r9dhcbfa/windenergy.htm>. Our office is currently reviewing at least 15 potential wind power projects in New York State.